

# Plastic is not fantastic!

**SAY NO TO PLASTIC AND SAVE EARTH**

Single-use plastics are a human addiction that we must face head on. Plastic pollution is not only **impacting** our waters and marine life, but also the human food chain and our overall health.

Plastic is **accumulating** in the world's oceans at a **staggering** rate. An estimated eight million tons of plastic – the equivalent of over 26,600 Boeing 747 planes – are swept into our seas and oceans every single year, mainly via rivers and coastal urban centres, through, for example, uncaptured waste, sewage systems, road run-off and littering.

This pollution problem is so **ubiquitous** that plastic can be found throughout the **marine** environment – from coastlines and nearshore lagoons to **remote** ocean hotspots where plastics, caught up in ocean currents, are gathered up into huge 'garbage patches' that **swirl** on the ocean surface and many metres below. Plastics are even found in polar ice.

Only twenty percent of the plastic pollution in our seas and oceans comes directly from illegal dumping at sea or commercial fishing activity. The majority enters the oceans from land-based sources of plastic **debris** and even from our very own homes.

These plastics pose a huge danger to sea life, with over 500 marine species known to suffer from **entanglement** in and **consumption** of plastic debris, both of which often prove **fatal**.

To make matters worse, the **durable** nature of plastic means that this material does not **biodegrade** in the ocean. It simply breaks up into smaller and smaller pieces, lingering in the marine environment for centuries.

Plastic is of course, not the only pollutant of our oceans and seas; there are many others. And it's not only oceans and seas affected by plastic and other human **detritus**.

Yes, multinationals and governments have to take action, but each individual must face up to their responsibility.

This is our planet, it's beautiful, let us all, together and individually, protect it.

**Read the passage and answer the questions in full sentences:**

1. Name four things which plastic pollution is impacting.
2. Is plastic pollution diminishing?
3. Name three ways in which plastic enters the seas and oceans.
4. Name three places where plastic can be found.
5. What percentage of this plastic pollution comes from land-based sources and our own homes?
6. What do 500 marine species suffer from?
7. Is plastic biodegradable?
8. Is plastic the only pollutant of our seas and oceans?
9. Is it just governments and multinational companies that should address the issue of pollution?
10. What does the writer want people to do and why? To what extent do you agree?



Every day should be EARTH DAY



**Vocabulary: match up the like terms:**

Impacting	long-lasting
Accumulate	far away, distant
Staggering	to do with the sea
Ubiquitous	being trapped in
Marine	affecting
Remote	everywhere, all over
Swirl	spiral
Debris	decompose naturally
Entanglement	pieces of rubbish
Fatal	gather and increase
Durable	shocking, disgraceful
Consume	refuse, flotsam
Biodegrade	deadly
Detritus	eat/drink/ingest

**Look at the images and describe each. What information is each image trying to get across? Then, identify all the things that are harmful to the environment in the final image.**

**Always recycle old plastic. Never just throw it away!**

**Plastic definition: a synthetic material made from a wide range of organic polymers such as polyethylene, PVC, nylon, etc., that can be moulded into shape while soft, and then set into a rigid or slightly elastic form.**



**8,000,000 tons of plastic waste leak into the oceans every year!**  
**...That is 15 plastic shopping bags for every metre of coastline on Earth!**

**Here are 9 things every person can do to help (advice from GREENPEACE). Unscramble the sentences and then decide which ones you can do. Put them in order of importance.**

1. reusable Always bottle. a carry
  2. no to straws! Say. You straw. need a don't
  3. Take a with cup coffee reusable you.
  4. put your and plastic vegetables in fruit bags. Don't
  5. refill stations Use detergents for
  6. no to cutlery disposable Say
  7. milk in glass reusable Buy bottles
  8. not buy cosmetics, toothpaste them microbeads and bodyscrubs with in Do
  9. your the shops bags to shopping Take you with
- And:** all have We plastic containers, make them last! let's

Identify all the things / activities that are harmful to the environment in the image below



Answers.....

### Keys

1. Plastic pollution is impacting (on) our waters, marine life, the human food chain and our overall health
2. No, it is increasing alarmingly.
3. It is entering the oceans via rivers, coastal urban areas, sewage systems, road run-offs and littering
4. It can be found on coastlines, sea shore lagoons, remote ocean hotspots
5. 80% comes from land-based sources and our own homes
6. They suffer from entanglement and consumption of plastic debris, which can prove fatal.
7. No, it is very durable. It just breaks up into smaller pieces and can last for centuries
8. No, there are many others.
9. No, each individual should take some responsibility
10. To protect our planet, because it's beautiful. Well, I agree 100%! We have to do something!

### Match-up

Impacting – affecting  
Accumulate – gather and increase  
Staggering - shocking, disgraceful  
Ubiquitous – everywhere  
Marine – of the sea  
Remote – far-f, distant  
Swirl – spiral  
Debris – pieces of rubbish  
Entanglement – get caught/trapped/wrapped up in  
Fatal – deadly/mortal  
Durable – long-lasting  
Consumption - eat, drink, ingest  
Biodegrade – decompose/break down naturally  
Detritus – waste  
(NOTE: detritus/debris = very similar terms, mainly used interchangeably)

*The images: describing images is, to a certain extent, open-ended. Hopefully, they will promote discussion*

### The unscramble: (This is advice from Greenpeace)

1. Always carry a reusable bottle
2. Say no to straws. You don't need a straw!
3. Take a reusable coffee up with you.
4. Don't put your fruit and vegetables in plastic bags.
5. Use refill stations for detergents
6. Say no to disposable cutlery – *and plastic plates etc, unless you keep them forever!*
7. Buy milk in reusable glass bottles
8. Do not buy cosmetics, toothpaste and body scrubs with microbeads in them.
9. Take your shopping bags to the shop with you  
AND We all have plastic containers, let's make them last!

*Final image: chopping trees/deforestation; throwing plastics away (mobile phone), using aerosols; plastic bags, cans, rubbish in the sea; pollution from vehicles – the plane, the car; smoke pollution from factories; invisible pollution – signals for mobiles. TV etc; from fires; etc.... You could discuss the issues concerned.*